

REMARKS

Applicants respond to the Office action mailed February 9, 2005. Applicants wish to point out that, while the Examiner checked the box on the Summary page indicating that this action is Final, the Examiner did not include statements in the text of the Office action to confirm that this is the case. Additionally, the undersigned checked the USPTO's electronic PAIR system and noted that the USPTO has recorded the pending Office action as "Non-Final."

Unable to get resolution of this inconsistency before filing this response and wishing to err on the side of caution, Applicants have treated the pending Office action as "Final" and responded accordingly. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner and that claims 2-8, 16, 18-24, 32, 34-40, 48, 50-56, 64, 66-72 and 80 be allowed. If the Office action was not meant to be Final, Applicants request that this Amendment be entered nonetheless and that the claims be allowed.

In the Office Action dated February 9, 2005, the Examiner allowed claims 16, 32, 48, 64, and 80 and objected to claims 2-8, 18-24, 34-40, 50-56, and 66-72, but maintained that these claims were allowable if re-written in independent form. The Examiner rejected claims 1, 9-15, 17, 25-31, 33, 41-47, 49, 57-63, 65, and 73-79.

With this amendment, Applicants have canceled claims 1, 17, 33, 49, and 65, and amended claims 2, 18, 34, 50, and 66 to include the limitations of the respective independent base claims. Claims 2, 18, 34, 50, 66 should now all be allowable independent claims.

Applicants also have amended claims 9-11, 14, 25-27, 30, 41-43, 46, 57-59, 62, 73-75, and 78 to depend from one of the now-allowable independent claims 2, 18, 34, 50, and 66. Remaining original claims 3-8, 12-13, 15, 19-24, 28-29, 31, 35-40, 44-45, 47, 51-56, 60-61, 63, 67-72, 76-77, and 79 all depended from a now-allowable claim and did not need amendment.

Following entry of this Amendment, claims 2-16, 18-32, 34-48, 50-64, and 66-80 will remain pending and should all be allowable. Applicants have not added any new claims. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants request entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

Dated: April 15, 2005

By: Linda J. Thayer
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